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Arafat's pact with the devil

News in Focus, Page 7



Mr. Bean hits America

Time Out



The mysterious death of Charles Jordan

The Magazine

Index

Business13
International6
News in Focus7
Opinion4
Shabbat Shalom11
Sports19

Barak fires half of Labor's staff

By SARAH HONG

Labor Party chairman Ehud Barak yesterday fired more than half the staff at party headquarters, citing a NIS 80 million debt. The Histadrut retaliated by declaring a strike of party employees.

Barak left party headquarters in Tel Aviv before having organizational department head Shaul Pasternak deliver dismissal notes to 36 of 70 staff members. Barak had sequestered himself for hours in his bureau with a team

of lawyers to decide who should be fired.

Barak said the cuts were mandatory given the party's debt. He said too many assets are being spent on payroll, leaving no money for political action.

The dismissals put Labor on a collision course with the Histadrut, which condemned the move, declared it illegal, and came out in support of the stunned employees, who barricaded themselves in the building.

See BARAK, Page 18

Histadrut seeks injunction against dismissals

By MICHAL YUDELMAN

The Histadrut last night petitioned Tel Aviv Labor Court for an immediate injunction against the Labor Party to prevent the firings, and the workers declared an immediate strike at the Histadrut's instructions.

The dismissal notices prepared by party leader Ehud Barak are unilateral and impertinent, and in complete contradiction to Labor's promise to negotiate with the workers' representatives before layoffs, clerks'

union chairman Leon Morozovsky said.

The Histadrut also set up a situation room, which began supplying food, blankets and logistical help to Labor Party workers, who occupied party headquarters and aren't letting anyone in or out.

Histadrut sources expressed fury at Barak's conduct, noting that the last thing the leader of the workers' party needs is to have his image linked to arbitrary firings.

See DISMISSALS, Page 2



A Labor Party worker dismissed by party leader Ehud Barak vents her anger yesterday. The graffiti beside her reads: 'Ehud fled again.'

PM: We won't be conned by Arafat

By JAY BUSHINSKY

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told the weekly cabinet meeting yesterday the government will not be "conned" by the Palestinian Authority into accepting its current level of action against terrorism as an appropriate response to July's Mahaneh Yehuda bombing.

His remarks coincided with a prevailing sense of dismay and disdain in official quarters at PA Chairman Yasser Arafat's convening of "national unity" conclaves with Hamas and Islamic Jihad leaders in Gaza and Ramallah.

"The steps which the PA has taken in the security sphere up to now are only initial steps which have not fulfilled our expectations," he said. "No one can expect the continuation of the peace process, while turning a blind eye to the

fact the PA is not fighting terrorism. For progress to be possible, and for the benefit of the PA itself, it must change the course it has taken till now."

US chides Arafat, Page 2

He contended Israel proved its goodwill this week by transferring to the PA part of the funds garnered from customs and taxes.

PA officials were quoted by Reuters as saying they received NIS 40 million that had been withheld.

Arafat charged that the sanctions imposed since the bombings are meant to "starve and humiliate" the Palestinian people.

See PM, Page 18

Histadrut, unions prepare for general strike

By MICHAL YUDELMAN

Hundreds of union leaders and local labor council members attended an emergency meeting at Histadrut headquarters in Tel Aviv yesterday to complete preparations for a general strike at the beginning of September.

The workers are protesting the government's economic reforms, including privatization, which will involve mass firings, the violation of signed pension and wage agreements, the taxing of study funds, and the continuing erosion of wages due to failure to update the cost of living increments.

At the stormy meeting, Histadrut Chairman Amir

Peretz called on the government to "take the workers' demands seriously and start talking immediately, because this time we will launch an all-out war."

But he also expressed the hope the Treasury talks which are to start Sunday, will stave off the strike.

"We don't want to strike. The plants are ours; they are our source of livelihood and we want to work. I hope we will be permitted to work in dignity, make a decent living, and grow old in dignity. Nobody has the right to deprive us of that," said Haim Katz, head of the Israel Aircraft Industries union.

See STRIKE, Page 18

WORLDVIEW

Reconciliation effort proves tricky for South Africa

By GILBERT A. LEWTHWAITE

PRETORIA, South Africa (Baltimore Sun) — The sheer cold-blooded calculation with which two killers gunned down communist leader Chris Hani in 1993, in an attempt to prevent the transfer of power to South Africa's black majority, may now help the murderers walk free.

It is an unintentional irony for

the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, as it considers forgiving the most dreadful atrocities of the apartheid era: If the murder was indeed "political," the white, right-wing extremists who are the confessed killers can be granted amnesty.

To decide the amnesty issue, the commission must judge whether three tests have been met: that the crime was indeed political, that it was in some sense in line with the political aims, and that the figures seeking amnesty have fully disclosed their actions. On that basis the commission has already granted amnesty to 47 people — and

denied it to nearly 2,500 others.

But possibility of Hani's murderers walking free in exchange for simply telling the details their crime is a troubling one in a country with a soaring crime rate and struggling to build confidence in its justice system.

"The problem is, it is undermining respect for the principle of justice," said Steven Friedman, director of the Center for Police Studies, and who has campaigned to require an expression of remorse and some form of compensation for families of victims.

See TRUTH, Page 6



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Israel, Croatia establish ties

Jerusalem Post Staff

After holding secret talks in Budapest, Israel and Croatia announced yesterday the establishment of diplomatic ties.

In its statement, Croatia apologized "for crimes committed against the Jewish people during the Nazi period" and by the

Croatian regime at that time. "Fascism, racial hatred, xenophobia and antisemitism are abhorrent and are condemned by the democratic government and people of the Republic of Croatia," added the statement signed by Hrvoje Sarinic, head of the Office of the President of the Republic of Croatia.

Israel was represented by Eitan Bentsur, the Foreign Ministry's director-general.

He expressed "great interest in Croatia's achievement of independence in addition to the importance which the people of Croatia today attach to values of freedom and democracy."

Croatia's President Franjo Tudjman also plans a visit to Israel to apologize personally for crimes perpetrated by some of his people during the Holocaust, the Foreign Ministry said.

Several months back Israel was cool to Zagreb's feelers for forging ties after Tudjman published a book called *Horrors of War* which

contained quotes deemed antisemitic.

A revised edition has been published omitting the offensive passages, Croatia's statement said.

Tudjman has expressed interest in building close cooperation with Israel in the fields of defense and industry.



US Congressman Benjamin Gilman, Chairman of the House International Affairs Committee, walks through Mahaneh Yehuda with Tsafi Adorian, whose husband Eli was killed in last month's bombing, prior to yesterday's memorial ceremony. (Brian Hendler)

US group holds Mahaneh Yehuda memorial ceremony

By JAY BUSHINSKY

A memorial ceremony yesterday at the site of last month's Mahaneh Yehuda suicide bombing inspired a fervent demand from Rep. Benjamin Gilman that Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat declare war on terrorism.

The chairman of the House International Affairs Committee said that there can be no peace process without a "core commitment" by Arafat to security and non-violence. "We came together to memorialize the 14 innocent people - young and old, men and women - who were engaged in everyday activities," Gilman said. "The suicide bombers were intent on killing Jews and Israelis and in destroying the peace process."

At his side were US Ambassador Martin Indyk and Mayor Ehud Olmert. The audience was comprised of a Congressional delegation as well as members of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations headed by its executive vice chairman, Malcolm Hoenlein, as well as shoppers and vendors.

Gilman said it was ironic that "these terrifying explosions, so heinous in their destruction," took place at the street name for the tree of life - Rehov Etz Ha'Chaim. Indyk said the Mahaneh Yehuda

market represents life in Israel, adding that its distinctively national character may have been the reason it was chosen as the terrorists' target.

Referring to the political and diplomatic aspects of the anti-terrorism issue as it is being played out in the US, Gilman noted that the State Department "failed" to submit a report to Congress on Arafat's compliance or non-compliance with its demand that the PA fight terrorism.

By not issuing the report in mid-July, as requested, the State Department made it obvious "even before the latest tragedy," that the US government could not certify that Arafat and the PA were complying with their commitment, he said.

In an interview conducted on the eve of the memorial ceremony, Hoenlein credited President Clinton with having encouraged and supported the omnibus anti-terrorism bill "despite the reservations harbored by some members of his administration." Hoenlein said it took 18 months to get it through Congress.

He praised the president's determination to stand up to terrorism in the US and abroad.

While various Arab-American groups which favor the regional peace process have been welcomed to the White House, persons known to support Hamas or



A Mahaneh Yehuda vendor kisses the hands of Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert (left) and Benjamin Gilman during their tour of the market yesterday. (Ariel Jerozolimski)

who are suspected of being directly or indirectly-linked to any Middle Eastern terrorist activities never have been on the Presidential guest list, he went on. Hoenlein was certain the State Department will publish a list of terrorist organizations as required by Congress, attributing the delay to legal considerations.

Referring to a speech made by Nabil Ramlawi, the Palestine Liberation Organization's representative to the UN in Geneva, who accused Israel of injecting Palestinian children with the AIDS virus, Hoenlein said the US delegate, Nancy Rubin, has written a letter demanding that the UN repudiate it "on and for the record."

Delegation threatens to withhold US aid to PA

By STEVE RODAN

A visiting delegation of US congressmen, expressing alarm over Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat's embrace of Hamas, warned yesterday Congress will not renew aid to the PA unless it wages a successful battle against terrorism.

Members of the delegation also warned that if Arafat refuses to combat terrorism, the Israeli-Palestinian peace process will collapse.

"We want to see not only efforts," said Rep. Benjamin Gilman (R-NY), chairman of the House International Relations Committee. "We want to see results. We want them to live up to their commitments. Until they do, we will hold back funds."

The delegation was scheduled to meet with Arafat in Ramallah last night and members said they would relay this to him.

Earlier, the delegation toured Jerusalem's Mahaneh Yehuda market, the scene of the suicide bombings on June 30 that killed 14 people and injured more than 170.

Gilman said he was not convinced Arafat was genuine in fulfilling his commitments under Oslo Accords, including the battle against terrorism and the PLO charter revision.

"So far, we have not been convinced that the PLO charter has been changed," Gilman said. "Some speak of 100 percent efforts. Some want 100% results. Arafat must make good on his commitments. Without such a commitment, there can't be a process. Yasser Arafat has come to a fork in the road. He must make a choice."

The annual \$100 million in aid to the PA was cut off on August 13, but congressional sources say the move only affected about 30 percent of the funding. The rest has already been allocated to projects sponsored by the US Agency for International Development.

An amendment sponsored by Rep. James Saxton (R-NJ) would cut off all funding to the PA.

A senior congressional source said the State Department plans to lobby hard to renew aid to the PA, when Congress returns from recess early next month.

Another member of the delegation, Rep. Eliot Engel (D-NY), said Congress will not rush to restore aid to the PA. "We're going to give this a harder and longer look after the terrorist attacks," he said. "We believe that Yasser Arafat has to go after terrorists and until he does, we will be reluctant to help him."

Engel also said he would tell Arafat of his concern over the PA's renewal of dialogue with Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

Official in PM's Office blasts Weizman

By BAT SHEVA TSUR

Arye Shumer, the director-general of the President's Bureau yesterday called for the dismissal of a senior official in the Prime Minister's Office who reportedly said that President Ezer Weizman is "undermining" the prime minister and government.

Ma'ariv ran the accusations in its lead story yesterday. Quoting an unnamed senior source in the Prime Minister's Office, the paper said that "Weizman pushes himself in everywhere and causes damage... he interferes in matters that do not belong to him, is pathetic, and wants to earn a second term of office at any price."

With reference to his upcoming visit to Washington, the official reportedly said: "Weizman used pressure to be received by [President Bill] Clinton and one can imagine what he will tell him."

The official added that the elected government, not the president, is supposed to conduct foreign policy.

It is possible that there is someone in the Prime Minister's Office that does not like what I am doing,

but I do what I have to do," Weizman told Ma'ariv when asked for his response.

Asked about his remarks in the North that the government is not doing enough on a day-to-day basis and that the complaints of people there are valid, Weizman said: "[Foreign Minister] David Levy said the same thing. I have slept there three times when there were Katyusha attacks. Jealousy sometimes makes people go crazy."

He added that he is not aware of any problem between him and the premier.

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu reportedly was "furious" when he heard the official's remarks. "These remarks were made without my permission and, moreover, they are the exact opposite of my position," he was quoted as saying. "I admire and am very fond of the president."

He said the close relations between them have "become even stronger recently." During his Caesarea vacation last week, Netanyahu and his family twice visited the Weizmans informally.

Asked whether Netanyahu planned to dismiss the official,

his spokesman Shai Bazak told Educational TV's *Erev Hadash* yesterday: "We are not involved in investigations and axing staff... The president and prime minister work together well and will know how to do so in the future."

In a conversation from Washington, Shumer stressed that

whenever Weizman meets with foreign leaders, he stresses that Netanyahu is the address for political negotiations.

Bazak confirmed that the president's upcoming Washington visit, planned for October 4, is being coordinated between Shumer, and senior officials in the Prime Minister's Office.

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NEWS

in brief

Transport Ministry allocates NIS 3m. to North
Transport Minister Yitzhak Levy announced yesterday he would allocate NIS 3 million for various projects in communities along the confrontation line in the North. *Jerusalem Post Staff*

Terrorist victim back home 2 years after attack
Yael Lahav, 39, who was seriously wounded in the Bus No. 26 terrorist bombing in Jerusalem's Ramat Eshkol neighborhood, was released from Hadassah's Ein Kerem Hospital yesterday - exactly two years since the attack.
"I still don't remember a thing about what happened," she said. "My memory returned only two months after the attack."
She had a series of operations on her arm, and still requires orthopedic aids, but is able to walk and even began driving lessons in a special car designed for her disability. *Itim*

Top politicians setting up fund for the needy
Agriculture Minister Rafael Eitan and a list of Knesset members from various parties announced plans yesterday to set up a fund for the needy to which they would each donate NIS 1,000 a month from a special salary increase being paid to senior officials.
Joining Eitan are MKs Yael Dayan of Labor, Naomi Blumenthal of Likud and Rehavim Ze'evi of Moledet. *Itim*

Arab League asks help for Palestinians
CAIRO, Egypt - The Arab League has urged member nations to help the Palestinian Authority overcome financial hardships caused by Israel's three-week-old closure, a statement said yesterday. Arab League secretary-general Esamat Abdel-Meguid thanked Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak who pledged \$10 million to the Palestinians on Tuesday.
Abdel-Meguid hopes that the league's other 21 nations will follow suit to enable the PA to "face the blockade policy (closure) and collective punishment imposed by Israel." *AP*

Court asked to end bus segregation
The Israel Women's Network has petitioned the High Court to put an end to the segregation of men and women on certain bus lines in Bnei Brak. In its petition against Transport Minister Yitzhak Levy, the network says that segregation violates the Basic Law: Human Freedom and Dignity and is opposed to the principle of equality. They note that the women are told to sit in the back of the bus and that this is degrading and difficult for mothers with small children or women with heavy baskets. The petition also asks for a halt to plans to segregate some Jerusalem bus lines. *Batsheva Tsur*

Plane swerves off-course during landing
An Egyptian plane swerved off the runway as it landed at Ben-Gurion Airport yesterday morning and hit two light poles. No one was hurt. The pilot of the Air Sinai Boeing 737 arriving from Cairo managed to regain control of the plane and return it to the runway. *Itim*

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Ms. Calderon Ben-Shachar is currently the Chairperson at "Alma" Hebrew College, and Mr. Bar-Or is the Director of Amutat "Kolot".

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When silence is not golden

Maybe I have been wrong these past two years. Maybe Americans should stop travelling to Israel. After all, if you are murdered by a Palestinian terrorist, that's your tough luck.

Those are not truly my feelings but it is the message that some of us are getting. The "us" are the parents and families of those Americans who have lost sons and daughters, sisters and brothers, mothers and fathers, to the suicide bombers and others who are so intent on not letting Jews live in the State of Israel. The message is coming not from the Palestinian side, but from our own.

I recently received the horrifying news that the Palestinian Authority has released a terrorist who, according to the Israeli government, was involved in the 1995 bombing attack in which my daughter, Alisa, was murdered.

A 35-page report issued by the Israeli government on July 20, 1997, stated that in recent months, the PA "has released dozens of terrorists from detention, including... Nabil Sharhi, who helped prepare the bomb used in the April 1995 Kfar Darom attack in which seven Israelis and one American [Alisa] were killed."

Unfortunately, this is not the only case in which suspects in the murders of Americans have been identified and found to be living in territory controlled by the PA. For instance: The PA has ignored Israel's request to hand over Muhi Sharif, who transported the explosives to the terrorist who carried out the August 21, 1995 Jerusalem bus bombing, in which five people, including Connecticut school teacher Joan Davenny, were murdered.

The PA has ignored Israel's request to hand over Nafez Mahmoud Sabih, who helped plan the February 25, 1996 Jerusalem bus bombing, in which Jewish Theological Seminary student Matthew Eisenfeld, of Connecticut, and his fiancée, Sara Duker, of New Jersey, were murdered.

STEPHEN M. FLATOW

US Jewish leaders must speak out against the PA's release of terrorists who murdered Americans

the head of Yasser Arafat's General Intelligence Service, masterminded the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre of 11 athletes, including David Berger, of Cleveland, a dual Israeli-American citizen.

Yet, since the issuance of the report, to my knowledge only one American Jewish organization, the Zionist Organization of America, has seen fit to take note of the situation and to ask the American government to act.

I AM publicly asking our Jewish leaders to speak out against the Palestinian Authority's release of Sharhi and to urge the United States government to use all means at its disposal to ensure the arrest and prosecution of Sharhi and others suspected in the murders of American citizens. The morality of the situation requires nothing less.

If, for some reason, Arafat will not transfer Sharhi to Israel for prosecution (as is required by the Oslo Accords), then we should demand he be transferred to the US for prosecution under the provisions of the Anti-Terrorism Act, which permits the US to prose-

cute an individual who murders an American abroad.

Special Mideast envoy Dennis Ross recently said that America cannot ask for extradition of Nafez Sabih (suspect in the Duker-Eisenfeld murders) because "one of the obstacles to doing that is the fact that the US does not have an extradition treaty with the PA," but that is not the case.

According to Malvina Halberstam, a law school professor and former counselor on international law in the Office of the Legal Adviser at the State Department, Ross is wrong. Halberstam has stated:

"While it is correct that we do not have an extradition treaty with the PA, that does not mean that Nafez Sabih cannot be transferred to the US for trial. Even states that have extradition treaties with each other often use other means of rendition such as deportation. If the PA wants to hand over Sabih to the US for trial, it can certainly find a way to do so. The problem is that, thus far, the US has not requested the PA to do so."

If our leadership is afraid of upsetting the Oslo apple cart, it should remember that it doesn't bother the PA when its release of terrorists and its inaction in ending the terror threat allows others to knock over the push carts at Mahaneh Yehuda and to enlarge the circle of victims and their families.

Failure to pursue Sharhi and his ilk sends a message to terrorists everywhere that if they murder Americans, they will not be punished.

It is bad enough that the State Department warns Americans against travelling in Israel. When American Jewish leaders are silent, they do the same.

The writer is the father of Alisa Flatow, a victim of the terror attack at Kfar Darom on April 9, 1995. He is the founder of the Alisa Flatow Memorial Fund which provides scholarships for study in Israel.



Haredim in the zoo

Haredim have a public relations problem. As far as the secular media are concerned, they are the Jews who aren't there.

That does not mean, of course, that the haredim are not covered in the media. Quite the opposite. The media obsession with haredim finds its nearest parallel in the UN's obsession with Israel. (Standards of accuracy in both cases are roughly comparable.)

But while haredim are objects of discussion, they are not participants. The widespread assumption appears to be that no one in the haredi community is capable of articulating the community's world view in an intellectually coherent manner.

When issues involving the community arise, aligned on one side of the debate will be Jerusalem city councilman Ornan Yekutieli, MK Naomi Chazan, et al., and, on the other side, Dr. Meuahem Friedman or some other academic specializing in the haredi community. But haredim will not be permitted to speak for themselves.

In short, haredim are viewed as fit objects of sociological and anthropological study, rather than as legitimate participants in the national debate. The only haredim ever quoted are those with a talent for self-promotion and providing good copy in the form of shock headlines, such as Yehuda Meshi-Zahav, self-styled "director of operations" for the Eda Haredit.

The only time that haredim can be assured of access to the media is to condemn someone within their own community. Thus after the Shavuot confrontation at the Western Wall, rabbinic leaders were urged to publicly condemn the spitting and epithets or have it assumed they condoned it. Ignored was the repeated public rejection of violence as a means by all haredi authorities, most recently in the controversy over the Shabbat closing of Jerusalem's Rehov Bar-Ilan, when posters decrying violence signed by leading religious authorities appeared throughout Jerusalem.

Those who had never sought the views of rabbis on any issue of national concern suddenly proffered them a band on the cable spectrum, albeit for the exclusive purpose of apologizing. Not surprisingly, the generous offer was not seized upon.

JONATHAN ROSENBLUM

Treating haredim as historical curiosities adversely affects both the secular majority and the haredim

debate. First, they are forced to present traditional Judaism in terms that are understandable to those who start from different presuppositions.

But the problem goes deeper than that. Of necessity, the education of haredi children involves instilling them with a deep revulsion to all that is antithetical to Torah values in the surrounding society. It is not an education that starts from the premise that all truth is relative, and then tells the young, "Choose for yourself."

The danger for haredim in the negation of the surrounding society, however, is that in the process they will forget that society is composed of fellow Jews. For the haredi Jew, his role in life is to reveal the beauty of God's Torah through his words and deeds. But when haredim are consigned to their own enclaves and not allowed to speak to the broader public, the danger increases that they will forget about their audience.

Finally, the perception that the secular media will eagerly seize upon any lapses in the haredi community, but never allow that community to present itself in a favorable light can lead itself to a situation in which pressing issues within the community are not adequately addressed. The fear of "washing our dirty laundry in public" stifles the open discussion necessary to finding solutions.

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Congratulations, Massoomeh Ebtekar!

For the first time in the history of Iran, a woman has been appointed vice president. She is Prof. Massoomeh Ebtekar of Teheran University.

Almost two years ago, Ebtekar and I sat together for 11 days in Beijing at the UN's Fourth World Conference on Women. Since delegates from various nations sit alphabetically by country, as an Israeli delegate I found myself sitting a few seats away from Ebtekar and the rest of the Iranian delegation.

As we worked long hours into the night drafting the Platform for Action, the document adopted by all of the member states at the end of the conference, we shared thoughts on how best to improve the status of women and ensure equality for girls and women all over the world.

Among the areas of critical concern at the conference was "the inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision making at all levels." As an Israeli women's rights lawyer, I can only be a bit envious as I congratulate Ebtekar and the new president of Iran for appointing such an educated, qualified woman to the vice presidency of her country.

According to newspaper reports, she was educated in the US and holds a doctorate in chemistry. In addition to the vice presidency, Ebtekar has been appointed director of the Department of the Environment.

Mohammed Khatami, the new president of Iran, received enormous support from the women of

SHARON SHENHAV

his country during the recent election and promised to appoint women to leading positions in his government. He has made a good beginning on his campaign promises with the appointment of Ebtekar. Sadly, in Israel, our political leaders are not so gender-conscious. Despite a plethora of qualified women, our prime minister has not seen fit to appoint a

As a women's rights lawyer, I can only be a bit envious of Iran for appointing a woman vice president

woman to be his deputy. In fact, women are rarely seen in decision-making forums and the idea of equality between the sexes in the sharing of power is a joke.

Women's rights activists in our region will be watching with interest to see if and how Ebtekar uses her new position to improve the social, economic, and political status of Iranian women. One of her greatest challenges, which we will be following with special interest, is how she and her colleagues will deal with the influence of religion on the rights of women to marry and divorce, to participate actively in public life and to dress according to their taste.

ALTHOUGH we are proud that we live in a Western-style democratic state, the problems faced by Iranian women are not so different

physically attacked and verbally abused by religious extremists in Jerusalem because they chose to dress in summer clothes which were not considered modest enough. The Super Sol supermarket chain has installed "modesty guards" at several of its stores. In these stores, women are not permitted to enter if they are wearing pants or if they do not meet the modesty standards set by some of the haredi customers.

Despite the ruling by the High Court of Justice over 10 years ago that a woman had a right to serve on a religious council, the issue has come up again and again as local rabbis refuse to allow duly elected women to sit on these councils. The cases include Efrat, Jerusalem, Netanya and Haifa.

Jewish women in Israel and abroad are probably the most highly educated and well organized group of women in the world. Jewish women's rights organizations are vocal and responsive. Nonetheless, we Jewish women have failed to achieve full equality in any area of private or public life.

Can it be that a country like Iran will prove to be more responsive to the demands of its women for justice and equality? Will Ebtekar succeed where we have failed?

The writer is director of the Overseas Department of Na'ama.

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Column One
The Blair necessities of government
By Thomas O'Dwyer



The secret of Great Britain would appear to be that it is much greater than the sum of its parts. That explains why it is mainly the English who are so afeared of splitting up the United Kingdom. (What sort of identity crisis is this - a former empire that cant even settle on one name for itself?)

It may also explain why there is blessed relief that a leader of the stature of Tony Blair has emerged to forge a new image for the nation. That's why it is still giving him an 80 percent approval rating after his first 100 days in office. Who would have believed we would ever live to see a Labor politician streets ahead of royalty in British opinion polls?

There is nothing wrong with some (or sum) of the parts of Britain. But, to digress to anecdote, after flying into London from a recent week in Scotland with some Israeli journalists, it was amazing to see bow swiftly we all reached a snap decision - it is quite noticeable how unpleasant the English remain: superior and snobbish, yet tabloid-crude and yobbishly anti-intellectual, all at the same time. And they complain about the French!

Here was a lady foreign journalist trying to decide whether to send her luggage in one taxi while she travels in another. Help for the customer from your friendly London cabbie? English gentleman? Forget it. "Make up your bloody mind, mate," he snarled. "I 'aven't got all bloody day."

Caligulans
Within the next two hours, we had been insulted by an obnoxious hotel receptionist who had lost two room bookings, and by the sniffy staff of a pretentious restaurant who turned a 10-minute wait for a pre-booked table into two hours. Their condescending Caligulan air suggested it served us right for not appreciating their greatness.

Our conversation while we waited was already laced with fond nostalgia for the Scots, who had enduallied us for a week with their utter charm, humor, culture and elegance.

No wonder all those old jokes are about the Englishman, the Irishman, and the Scotsman. (Poor old Wales - their culture was so suppressed for so long, scarcely even a stereotype survived, except maybe Jones the postman and Dylan the drunk. And Cornwall? Lost forever, alas.)

To understand the Brits, you have to dissect them into their component parts and discover how much the repressed English still skulk behind the kilts of Nanny Celt.

But the kilts have been drawn aside in recent years to reveal to the cameras the devious and unpleasant side of a creaking old English establishment. There are the ridiculous royals - hereditary dinosaurs in a modern world, a

Police scandal rocks NY

By MARILYN HENRY

NEW YORK - New York police, recently basking in the glory of a foiled bomb plot, now are reeling under allegations that rogue cops in Brooklyn tortured a Haitian immigrant by shoving the wooden handle of a toilet plunger up his rectum.

As the police inquiry expanded yesterday, an instance of alleged abuse surfaced in another Brooklyn precinct. A police officer in 1994 sodomized a 17-year-old hassidic girl in his patrol car while his partner watched, according to radio reports.

And a grand jury was reviewing allegations against an officer in a third Brooklyn precinct. A woman who had been arrested last December on a disorderly conduct charge had been forced to perform oral sex while she was in custody, according to news accounts.

In response, Mayor Rudy Giuliani, saying he did not want New Yorkers to be afraid of the police, formed a 28-member task force on police and community relations, which was scheduled to hold its first meeting yesterday.

The task force, which has been a \$15 million budget, is to set up a series of meetings between the 38,000 members of the Police Department and New Yorkers.

The task force was created only days after an angry march on Brooklyn's 70th Precinct by more than 2,000 demonstrators, many waving plungers and Haitian flags.

In a tacit acknowledgement of police racism, Police Commissioner Howard Safir said that he would move more black officers into the precinct, including New York officers who had been sent to the Caribbean to help reform Haiti's abusive police.

The Brooklyn district attorney has charged two officers with aggravated sexual abuse and first-degree assault in the case of Haitian Aboer Louima. Louima's attorney, Carl Thomas, demanded that the charges be upgraded to attempted murder, and Louima, 30, is expected to file a \$55 million claim against the city.

The police inquiry into the Louima assault was also trying to determine whether other officers in the 70th Precinct - which serves a large immigrant community - tried to cover up

the attack. Fourteen other officers face some kind of departmental disciplinary action.

Getting police cooperation had been difficult. When one police officer came forward late last week, Giuliani commended him, but also hinted at the danger police face when they police each other. The informant was not identified and is under police protection, the mayor said.

The police scandal, tinged with racism as well as brutality, comes only a few months before the mayoral election campaign.

Louima said one of his attackers told him, "This is Giuliani time, not Dinkins time," a reference to Giuliani's predecessor, David Dinkins, the city's first black mayor.

While New York's crime rates are down, however, suggestions of police aggression and abuse have risen in the last three years. Last year, there were a number of minorities fatally shot by police, including a unarmed navy veteran shot in the back on a Bronx subway platform, a unarmed 15-year-old shot dead in the back of a car, and an unarmed man shot 18 times while sitting in a parked car.

20
charged in US slave scam

By RONALD J. OSTROW

WASHINGTON (LA Times) - Twenty people were indicted Wednesday for allegedly smuggling more than 50 deaf and speech-impaired Mexicans into the United States and making them virtual slaves - at times beating, electrically shocking or otherwise coercing them to sell rinkets to the public.

In carrying out an alleged four-year conspiracy of involuntary servitude, outlined by a federal grand jury in Brooklyn that issued the indictments, some participants stand accused of beating a victim who begged for a day off because of sickness, electroshocking one for low sales and handcuffing an attempted escapee to a bed for more than a week while he attached key chains to trinkets.

"Every case of slavery is terrible, but this one is especially appalling because of the double exploitation," Isabelle Katz Pinzler, acting assistant attorney-general for civil rights, said at a news conference.

Authorities say the ring likely generated more than \$1 million in annual sales from the nationwide trinket business.

"An enterprise that existed for the sole purpose of exploiting the labor of hearing-disabled aliens has been substantially dismantled, and its ringleaders apprehended and held to face serious criminal charges," Zachary W. Carter, US attorney in Brooklyn, said.

In carrying out the conspiracy, recruiters lured deaf Mexicans to come to the United States, falsely promising them prosperous jobs, the 11-count indictment charged. After being smuggled into the United States, they were taken to Los Angeles and temporarily harbored at a safe house operated by three of the defendants: Andreas Pfeiffer, Hilario Rivera Paulenti and Carlos Rivera Lozano, Paulet's son.

The three Los Angeles suspects, like the ringleaders in New York, are themselves deaf and speech-impaired, authorities said.



VMI welcomes women
Female Virginia Military Institute rat Erin Claunch gets yelled at by cadets while doing push-ups during rat line training at the school this week. Claunch is part of a group of 30 females - the first ever - to enroll in the 158-year-old school. (AP)

TRUTH
Continued from Page 1

"Truth does not automatically lead to reconciliation," Friedman said, citing the case of Brian Mitchell, a former police officer granted amnesty for his involvement in the killing of 20 villagers.

Mitchell has pledged to spend three days a week for the rest of his life doing social work in the victim's community.

"At least we would be on firmer ground... linking amnesty to a process in which a person is saying: 'Look, what I did is wrong and I want to try to correct it,'"

Friedman said. "It becomes easier for people to respect the process."

The Hani case focuses on the assassination of a key politician as part of an effort to foment a right-wing revolution. It also highlights the dilemma the country faces in trying to put its past behind it, and the tensions that persist as society seeks reconciliation through truth.

Remorse is not a prerequisite for amnesty because the drafters of the statute decided it would be too difficult to judge whether it was genuine.

"How do you test remorse?" said Dennis Potgieter, a member of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, who helped draft the legislation. "It's not really practi-

cal." Parliament decided that full disclosure is "a better indication that you take some responsibility for what you have done."

"I am convinced... this is the most effective way to deal with the past and somehow not just walk away from it," Potgieter said. "That is the kind of reality we are facing."

But this reality is sometimes difficult for society to accept, as can be seen during the hearings in the Hani case, taking place in the auditorium of Pretoria's old City Hall.

There is scant evidence of reconciliation in the room. On one side sit the killers' supporters, all white, all favoring forgiveness. On the other sits Limpko Hani with her daughters Lindiwe and Nomakwe, surrounded by outraged sympathizers, all black, all demanding retribution.

Hoots of derision and bursts of applause alternate between the two sides, detracting from the restraint of a legal hearing and contributing to a sense of confrontation.

On the floodlit stage, seated at three white covered tables against a black curtain, are the two killers. The Hani family lawyers opposing the amnesty applications, and the committee members who will decide their fate. They all follow the testimony of how and why Hani was killed four years ago - setting off a wave of violence that left 54 people dead - and why his assassins believe they should now walk free.

Clive Derby-Lewis, a smooth-talking politician of the ultra-right Afrikaner Conservative Party, was the master-mind. He supplied the murder weapon, a stolen 9 mm. Z88 pistol with a silencer.

The man who pulled the trigger was Janusz Walus, an anti-communist Polish immigrant, sallow-faced and crop haired, who shot Hani at point blank range on the driveway of his home.

Both were sentenced to death for the murder, but the government of President Nelson Mandela has outlawed the death penalty and the sentences were commuted to life imprisonment.

Derby-Lewis - the only one of the pair to testify so far - has expressed sorrow to Limpko Hani, who sits daily in the front row glowering at her husband's assassins. Her chief attorney, George Bizos, argues against freeing them.

"I do not expect the Hani family to forgive me," Derby-Lewis said. "There was nothing personal in our attack. If anything, it was an indication of his importance and status."

"I am the last to cry for him," Walus told police after his arrest. "He was the leader of the communists in this country and I hated him for that."

Hani was chosen as the victim because he was a high-profile personality regarded as a potential future president.

According to Derby-Lewis, the murder was intended to plunge the country into chaos, allowing the extreme right to seize control from the ruling white National Party of President F.W. de Klerk, who was preparing to hand over control to the black majority led by Mandela.

"We were ready for war," Derby-Lewis told the tribunal. "It was patently obvious to me that de Klerk was busy with the betrayal of the Afrikaner people."

Derby-Lewis was also driven by religious fervor. Justifying the selection of Hani for assassination, he wrote that his death would "strike a blow for almighty God and Christianity against the anti-Christian communism in the form of the leader of the South African Communist Party."

But with amnesty in mind, he stressed that while his "duty is to almighty God," the driving motivation for the Hani murder was political.

"Derby-Lewis has been well advised by his lawyers," said Friedman. "He is doing what he should be doing in order to comply with the formula [for amnesty], but it creates somewhat different consequences for people who are trying to restore confidence and respect for justice."

The hearing is expected to continue several more days; the committee is expected to take several weeks, if not months, to reach its decision.

We would honor your presence at the first year memorial gathering for

Dr. BENJAMIN HALEVI ז"ל

Honorable Justice of the Supreme Court
Honorable Member of the Knesset

to be held on August 25, 1997 (כ"ב באב תשנ"ז)
at 5:00 p.m. (17:00) at the
Sanhedria Cemetery, Jerusalem.

Widow: Michal Halevi
Son: Dr. Hai Halevi and Zahava
Daughter: Ophra and Prof. Geoffrey Spyer
Grandchildren: Yael and Carmel Spyer
Shaull, Shachar and Yair Halevi
Great-granddaughter: Adi Halevi

On the fourth anniversary of the death of our dear husband and brother

ERICH YAKOV HAIM BAUM ז"ל

we will visit his grave at the Har Hamenuhot Cemetery, Jerusalem, on Monday, August 25, 1997 at 2:30 p.m.

His wife, Dr. Laszlo-Baum

The unveiling of the tombstone of our dear father and grandfather

JOSEPH SCHNITZER ז"ל

will take place on Sunday, August 24, 1997, at 5:00 p.m., at the Eretz Hachaim Cemetery, Beit Shmesh.

Sharon and Julian Himmelfarb and family
Aurumie and Marjo Schnitzer and family

We mourn the untimely passing of our friend and colleague

ELLEN SCHECHET

The Management and Staff of The Jerusalem Post

Thirty years have passed since the death of our dearest father and grandfather

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A kind and generous man who never turned away a needy person and an inspiration to all who knew him. His memory lives on in his good work.

We miss you.

Son, Joseph
Daughter, Sheila
Granddaughters, Michele, Hadas, Evis.

A memorial service will be held on the 5th yahrzeit of

Rabbi Prof. ELIEZER BERKOVITS ז"ל

on Monday, August 25, 1997 (22 Av 5757) at 10:30 a.m. at the Eretz Hachaim Cemetery (RCA Area)

The Family

Nita Schechet grieves for

ELLEN

The funeral took place yesterday, August 21, 1997.
Shiva at 25 Harav Berlin, Jerusalem.

With great sorrow we announce the sudden passing of our beloved father and grandfather

DAVE STANGE

on August 18, 1997 in Durban, South Africa.

Deeply mourned and sadly missed by
Children: Max, Peter and Dorit
Grandchildren: Michael, Shelley and Eyal

On the first anniversary of the passing of our beloved

HANNAH WEINSTEIN ז"ל

a memorial service will take place on Tuesday, August 26, 1997, at 5 p.m., at the Yarkon Cemetery, Tel Aviv. We shall meet at the graveside (Block 1, Area 8, Row 5, No. 10)

Simle Weinstein and Family

The South African Zionist Federation in Israel and South Africa mourns the passing of

SIDNEY BERG

Former General Secretary of SAZF, and a distinguished Jewish and Zionist visionary

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Making a pact with the devil?

By reaching out to his Islamic opposition, the PA chairman is admitting weakness and putting his leadership at risk, Steve Rodan and Mohammed Najib report

About a year ago, Sheikh Hamid Bitawi and several clerical colleagues asked Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat to reopen the offices of the Moslem Brotherhood...

What Arafat wants, Israeli officials say, is a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital and an internationally recognized corridor connecting the West Bank to Gaza...

Enter Hamas. Its schools have been operating on schedule. Its clinics are serving Palestinians everywhere...

ARAFAT HAS wavered between embracing the opposition and destroying it. Take Bitawi's request for the renewal of the Moslem Brotherhood movement...

The sheikhs were noncommittal. Still, the officials hurried to Arafat and urged him to sign an order that would grant Bitawi's group a license to a splinter Brotherhood group...



Reconciliation: Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat embraces his Islamic militant rival, Hamas leader Abdel Aziz Rantisi, during a show of Palestinian unity in Gaza City on Wednesday.

"This kind of dialogue with Hamas happens when there is a crisis, when Arafat does not have an answer, when the PA feels that it needs Hamas's weight."

they wounded several people last week while breaking up a demonstration using live ammunition. Arafat, Palestinian sources say, can't even organize mass anti-Israeli demonstrations...

sign the request and shelved it until further consideration. The Moslem Brotherhood, however, thought the worst. Sheikh Ibrahim Abu Samhadaneh, chief justice of the Sharia (Moslem) court in Gaza, demanded an urgent meeting with Arafat...

"You are playing with fire," the senior Palestinian source quotes Samhadaneh as saying. "You will pay dearly for this." Samhadaneh resigned from the state-supported Islamic court and moved to Jordan...

Today, Arafat wants to make his peace with Hamas. He resisted heavy Israeli and US pressure to arrest Hamas militants after the Mahaneh Yebuda bombings on July 30...

In addition, Arafat met with Hamas leader Moosa Abu Marzook earlier this month and,

according to Palestinian sources, pressed for genuine cooperation with the Islamic fundamentalist movement. The PA chief has escalated his threats against Israel and says the Palestinians could abandon the peace process with Israel.

ARAFAT, PALESTINIAN analysts say, has changed his mind about Hamas's value. The change is largely due to the return of Abu Marzook to Amman. Abu Marzook, head of the organization's political wing, was deported earlier this year from the US to Jordan...

and the leadership abroad. "Mousa Abu Marzook has been playing the delicate role of bringing together the dovish leadership in the territories and its hawkish counterpart in Amman, such as spokesman Ibrahim Ghousheh," a Hamas analyst says.

Abu Marzook has also been managing the flow of new funds to the organization. The main donor has been Saudi Arabia. Hamas offices have opened in Jeddah and Riyadh and banks in Europe and Jordan are used to transfer funds to Gaza and the West Bank.

estimates place support for Hamas in the territories at 35 percent. But Hamas is playing it cool with the PA...

"Our participation in the conference was approved on condition that Arafat discusses the release of Hamas detainees who are still in PA jails directly after the end of the first session of the national dialogue," Hamas leader Abdul Aziz Rantisi says.

The Islamic movement is also demanding that the PA end security cooperation with Israel. That,

Israeli officials say, is indeed taking place, as the exchanges of intelligence information has become paltry. The low point came in the aftermath of the Mahaneh Yebuda bombings, when PA security officials refused to make arrests of suspected Hamas terrorists...

ISRAELI INTELLIGENCE sources say Arafat is taking his biggest risk in trying to forge cooperation with Hamas. They say Hamas is growing stronger and any dialogue will legitimize the Islamic movement while pointing to the increasing weakness of Arafat.

Privately, senior aides to Arafat agree and have warned the PA chief of the dangers of Hamas.

A memorandum from PA Preventive Security chief Mohammed Dahlan to Arafat, first published on June 7 in the Amman newspaper Al-Urdun, whose contents were confirmed by Palestinian and Israeli intelligence sources, warned that Hamas is preparing to

"The potential competition, contradiction and conflict between the authority and Hamas-controlled town councils would prove time- and energy-consuming and could distract us from pursuing our national interests..."

DAHLAN DOES NOT oppose a national dialogue. But he warns against allowing Hamas to grow as a result. He also urged that PA and Fatah officials be more restrained in dealing with Hamas.

The PA security official calls for all candidates in the municipal council elections to be screened and that the campaign be closely monitored to eliminate a campaign against the PA.

"A step-by-step media and political campaign must be launched to warn the public against the danger inherent in a replication of the Algerian experience..."

"A step-by-step media and political campaign must be launched to warn the public against the danger inherent in a replication of the Algerian experience." - Preventative Security chief Mohammed Dahlan

exploit any crisis in the peace process or within the PA and plans to gain control over municipal councils when elections are held.

Dahlan's memorandum said Hamas is using the "Algerian model," in which it is avoiding a showdown with the PA while winning supporters from within Fatah, the PA and the Palestinian Legislative Council.

"In the event Hamas gains control over the municipal councils, the public would juxtapose the authority's past performance with the superior services provided by the movement," Dahlan's memorandum reads.

Dahlan envisions a scenario in which successfully-run Hamas-dominated municipal councils, aided by a massive inflow of funds from Islamic groups abroad, would win Israeli and US support as being a model of democracy.

Hamas win the vote to run the town councils."

Finally, Dahlan urges that "alternative and practical options, including postponing the vote or amending the law, be considered to avoid elections results harmful to the PA."

Indeed, PA officials acknowledge that despite Arafat's pledges, plans to hold municipal elections have been shelved.

Hamas militants have few illusions about Arafat's invitation for cooperation. They say they are prepared to join the PA in battle against Israel. But they will not allow Arafat to co-opt key members of the Islamic opposition in what they are convinced is his continued drive to neuter the movement.

"We are making it clear that Hamas is not like Fatah," a key Hamas operative says, echoing a recent address of Rantisi to his followers. "We are not based on the leadership of one man, even that of [Hamas founder] Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, let alone Mousa Abu Marzook."

"We are committed to a principle. We are working with Yassin, not for Yassin. We won't follow Fatah by worshipping people."

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DRIVE CAREFULLY

Lebanon: Is there any other way?



Accident of Kiryat Shmoua surveys the damage to her home following Tuesday's barrage of Katyusha rockets fired by the Hizbullah; Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri visits a 10-year-old injured in the South Lebanese Army shelling of Sidon on Monday.

The answer is to get out – now

Isn't often that Likud MK Gideon Ezra finds himself on the side of MK Yossi Beilin and other "dovish" Labor parliamentarians.

But when it comes to the question of Israel withdrawing unilaterally from what Beilin calls "the Will North" – Lebanon – Ezra firmly believes that is the course to take.

A former commander of the General Security Services operations in Lebanon, Ezra is unfazed by predictions of continued attacks from the North. He notes that "there is a difference between [Hizbullah's] shooting [at IDF soldiers] inside Lebanon, and shooting into Israeli territory from Lebanon." The former is more of a temptation.

And he reminds those who fear that Syria will have an interest in harassing Israel as long as there is no peace agreement that "since 1974, Syria hasn't fired a single



Gideon Ezra: 'Once Israel is no longer in Lebanon, Hizbullah will have less interest in attacking Israeli territory.' (Yossi Zeiger/PPA.)

bullet into Israel. "I'm all for reaching an agree-

ment with Syria, but we don't have one now," says Ezra. "I know many people believe that the Syrians will make our lives miserable until there is an agreement. But Syria hasn't done so thus far, and I don't think it will in the future."

"There is a difference between Syria supporting Hizbullah in southern Lebanon (now), and the way Syria will behave when we're not there. The Syrians are only in Lebanon because we are," Ezra points out, adding however that a unilateral withdrawal will only be possible if Israel is free to retaliate inside Lebanese territory, in response to an attack.

Another necessary condition for withdrawal is adequate arrangements for protecting Israeli residents of the north and the South Lebanese Army commanders.

"Here the solution would be to give our SLA allies the right to reside in Israel," says Ezra.

Michal Yudelman hears two opposing views on the Lebanon quagmire. MK Gideon Ezra is unfazed by predictions of continuing attacks if the IDF pulls out, while Uri Lubrani, the government's coordinator for Lebanon, fears those attacks would only intensify

Withdrawal is no option

Of course we all want to get out of Lebanon, says Uri Lubrani, but a unilateral withdrawal from the security zone is simply not an option.

"It's all very well to want out, the government coordinator for Lebanese affairs continues. But who will guarantee that Hizbullah's attacks will stop? I'm almost certain they will continue, with even greater intensity."

"Withdrawing unilaterally from Lebanon would leave us without any binding arrangements [working to end] the attacks, and it would mean abandoning the Lebanese residents in the security zone to the grace of heaven and to all those who wish them ill."

Lubrani has no doubt that the attacks on Israel would continue, almost certainly creating the conditions that would force Israel to invade Lebanon again – this time under far worse conditions, with much larger forces, and facing an actively hostile local population. "The whole messy story would begin all over again," Lubrani says.

He cites the widely held view that the Syrians are behind Hizbullah, adding, "Hizbullah is no less inspired by Iran – and that's a factor we cannot control."

Among those who advocate unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon



Uri Lubrani: 'Of course everyone wants out... but who will guarantee that Hizbullah's attacks will stop?' (Nitzan Shorer)

some, like MK Yossi Beilin, also want Israel to part company with the South Lebanese Army.

"But who will take its place?" Lubrani asks. "Only the IDF can. We cannot double the number of our soldiers in the security zone. The public wouldn't stand for it."

What about those who say the security zone should be widened in order to put Israel's northern settlements out of range of the Hizbullah's Katyusha rockets?

Lubrani is against it.

"It would mean a significant increase in the Shi'ite population under our control, creating an even broader front against us," he says.

One thing is clear to Lubrani: Israel will not be able to get out of Lebanon without Syrian involvement. For him, the only possible interim solution, in the absence of a comprehensive peace treaty, is one that confines itself to security arrangements. And a treaty "may prove highly complex and difficult to achieve – maybe even impossible," he says.

He sums up: "Our mission is to make every effort to prevent further deterioration, to explore every channel that can lead to solutions, even if they are only interim ones."

In this context, Lubrani emphasizes that Israel continues in its full support of the understandings reached following the Grapes of Wrath operation.

It regards the monitoring group established to deal with complaints by the parties as a very important vehicle for de-escalating and reducing tension.

The group's record so far has been very positive, and Lubrani hopes that, the complexity of the situation notwithstanding, it will continue its good work.

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Phillips Fine Art Auctioneers will conduct an auction of **Fine Judaica, Hebrew Books and Works of Art** on Wednesday, September 10 at 5:30 p.m. The auction will be held at Phillips', 406 East 79th Street, NYC. A public exhibition of the collection will be held on September 4 and September 7-10 (in the afternoons). The collection will feature Hebrew printed books, fine illustrated and illuminated manuscripts and scrolls, silver ceremonial pieces, textiles, porcelain, jewelry, paintings and prints, posters, postcards and ephemera.

A highlight of the extensive silver section is a pair of highly important silver Torah finials, Amsterdam, 1770s, estimate \$35,000-50,000. Among the paintings is an oil by Reuven Ruben, *Pomegranates On My Window*, Israel, 1960s, estimate \$18,000-28,000.

Elissa S. Shay, Phillips' Judaica specialist, will conduct a tour of the exhibition on Tuesday, September 9 at 6:00 p.m. An illustrated catalogue may be ordered by calling (212) 570-4830.

All are welcome.

Communicated

Cultural split in the camp

The rector of Bar-Ilan University has earned fierce condemnation in some quarters and applause in others for his critique of the 'haredization' of national-religious education. **Allison Kaplan Sommer** asked what prompted him to speak out.

Professor Yehuda Friedlander has no regrets. Even as the poison arrows are being flung in his direction from angry politicians, the rector of Bar-Ilan University says that he staunchly "stands by every word" of his harsh public criticism of what he sees as the "haredization" of national-religious education.

His home in Jerusalem. "If I am part of what is happening, it is because I didn't open my mouth earlier. We gave in for many years to these influences, and now the time has come to speak out."

Minister Meir Porush (United Torah Judaism) has called on the 140 faculty members who make up the Bar-Ilan senate, which elected Friedlander rector, to remove him from his position, tagging him an "inciter, a polarizing force, and full of hatred for portions of society."



OLEG 697

What Friedlander said

The national-religious camp has not trained enough educators and therefore is turning to haredim to teach in its schools, and these extremist forces, contends Prof. Yehuda Friedlander, are becoming "a Trojan horse which will destroy us from within," he said in an interview with the Hebrew daily *Yediot Aharonot* last week.

Specifically, Friedlander objects to the increased focus on national-religious education on extreme modesty - ranging from the dress code for girls from elementary-school age, measuring their skirts and making sure their legs are covered with stockings - to increased separation of the sexes.

He reserved his harshest words for the intellectual level of students at haredi yeshivot. In the Diaspora, he said, since the Jewish community had to support itself, only the true geniuses studied Torah full time as adults.

He also spoke out in favor of "live and let live" pluralism toward those who are not Orthodox - including the creation of an area at the Western Wall where men and women may pray together, and the inclusion of women and non-Orthodox on religious councils.

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WHY WOULD a prominent educator bring this on himself? Those who know Friedlander say that he has had these opinions "burning inside of him" for a long time - and they have been the subject of private conversation and internal debates within the national-religious camp for years.

So I decided to talk to the secular public using the press and tell them that the politicians, and those fighting for their financial interests, do not reflect the majority of observant Jews.

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So I decided to talk to the secular public using the press and tell them that the politicians, and those fighting for their financial interests, do not reflect the majority of observant Jews.

Some 50 fragments of medieval manuscripts are now at the Israel Museum. Sounds dull? Well, they form one of the most exciting and moving exhibitions I have ever seen.

Meir Ronnen
The Jerusalem Post

THE CAIRO GENIZA SEMINAR



In 1896 at the Ben Ezra Synagogue in the Fustat area of old Cairo, Prof. Solomon Schechter of Cambridge University revealed to the world the staggering contents of its Geniza. 140,000 fragments were given to the Cambridge University for study.

studied. Now a selection on loan from Cambridge is on view in Jerusalem. It presents a vivid picture of the spiritual - and not so spiritual - mores and business dealings of a medieval Jewish community.

DATE: Friday and Saturday, 19-20 September
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Shas leader Aryeh Deri called Friedlander 'shameful.' Moshe Gafni (UTJ) said he 'half Reform and wants to turn Judaism into a mockery.'

Shas leader Aryeh Deri called Friedlander "shameful" for his critique of the haredization of national-religious education. Moshe Gafni (UTJ) said he is "half Reform and wants to turn Judaism into a mockery."

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Drive Carefully

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Table with columns: Ticker, Last, Change. Includes AMEX and NASDAQ sections.

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TASE ROUNDUP

Stocks mixed on concern over Wall Street drop

The Tel Aviv Stock Exchange was mixed yesterday as investors expressed concern about potential drops in New York markets after the close of the week's trading in Tel Aviv.

The Maof Index of 25 most-traded stocks closed down 0.6 percent to 304.65. The Mishtanim Index of 100 most-traded stocks dropped 0.19%, to 294.46. In the

Mishtanim

294.46 ▼ -0.19%

Maof

304.65 ▼ -0.6%

NEW YORK MARKET INDEXES

Table with columns: Index Name, Last, Change. Includes DJ Industrial, DJ Transport, etc.

MISHANIM LEADING 100 TASE ISSUES

Table with columns: Ticker, Last, Change. Lists top 100 TASE issues.

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Table with columns: Ticker, Last, Change. Lists various Israeli companies.

Key Representative Rates

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OTHER MARKET INDEXES

Table with columns: Index Name, Last, Change. Includes FTSE 100, Tokyo Nikkei, etc.

DOLLAR CROSSRATES (US)

Table with columns: Currency, Last, Change. Includes Pound, Swiss Franc, etc.

INTERNATIONAL SHARES

Table with columns: Ticker, Last, Change. Lists international shares.

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US COMMODITIES

Table with columns: Commodity, Last, Change. Includes Cocoa, Coffee, etc.

LONDON COMMODITIES

Table with columns: Commodity, Last, Change. Includes Coffee, Brent crude, etc.

SPOT MARKET METALS (US)

Table with columns: Metal, Last, Change. Includes Silver, Gold, etc.

NEW YORK METAL FUTURES

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WORLD MARKET ROUNDUP

Euroshares run out of steam as Dow falters

LONDON (Reuters) - Wall Street's early signal that its three-day recovery may have run out of steam, a cue long-awaited by European dealers, pulled London shares off session highs and dragged a thin Paris market lower on yesterday.

Only the Frankfurt bourse, which closed below New York opened, stuck doggedly to its advance on relief the Bundesbank had left interest rates intact.

In London, Europe's biggest market, profit-taking after this week's sharp gains sent the FTSE 100 blue-chip index drifting off the session's best after the Dow Industrials Average slipped 60 points during the first two hours of trade after three days of 100-point-plus gains.

Refusing to top 5,000 again, as it had done for the first time earlier this month, the FTSE back-pedaled from earlier gains achieved partly on the back of Wall Street's rise, and closed 19.6 points higher at 4,978.0.

"There is an increasing number of people thinking that beyond the 5,000 level there is not a great deal of support in the market," one trader said.

Shares in British Telecom provided a boost to the FTSE, rising 28-1/2 points to 412 after the company confirmed it was talking with MCI to re-negotiate economic terms of their planned merger.

Frankfurt's DAX index stuck to its advance throughout the day as expectations were fulfilled that the Bundesbank would not raise interest rates after its first council meeting since the summer break.

In a more pessimistic and holiday-thinned Paris, the leading CAC-40 index slipped on profit-taking following the Bundesbank announcement, and was pulled down further by Wall Street's sluggish opening performance.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average ended up 103.13 points, or 1.3 percent, at 8,021.23 on Wednesday, having regained over three sessions more than it lost during Friday's 247-point plunge, its second biggest points fall ever.

A surge in technology stocks boosted investors' confidence that the relentless rise in U.S. share prices might still have further to go after its recent correction.

The Dow was back below 8,000, a level it breached for the first time just over a month ago.

Some European investors were encouraged by the US market's resilience, but others were concerned at the speed of the recovery and wary of stumbling on the road ahead.

"People are very wary of Wall Street at the moment, but nevertheless we will respond favorably to it," one London share trader said.

Although the central bank left interest rates unchanged, it announced a plan to set its key securities repurchase tenders every Tuesday as opposed to every second week - a return to previous policy seen as keeping markets even more on edge about possible rate hikes to defend the mark.

"The Bundesbank is playing it very clever. While we don't see them raising rates just yet, they are effectively keeping the threat alive and keeping a lid on dollar/mark," said Arnaud Mares, European strategist at Credit Agricole Indosuez.

Stenting tumbled after the Confederation of British Industry, the country's leading business lobby, said export orders were at a five-year low and forecast a decline in the pound throughout 1998.

WALL STREET REPORT

Dow plummets 127 points after electrifying rally

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Stocks backpedaled yesterday as investors banked some profits after lifting the Dow Jones industrial average more than 300 points higher over the last three days.

Based on early and unofficial data, the Dow ended down 127.28 points, or 1.5 percent, at 7,893.95.

Wall Street was also nervous heading into today's session, which has tended to bring big losses recently.

Last Friday, the Dow plunged 247 points in the second biggest point drop since the 1987 stock market crash.

In the broader market, declining issues swamped advances 2-1 on moderate volume of 494 million shares on the New York Stock Exchange.

The Nasdaq composite index fell 21.95 points, or 1.3 percent, to 1,606.75.

Investors were also preoccupied with a drop in bonds and renewed weakness in the dollar.

"It's no accident that as the dollar rallied over the past three

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NEWS

in brief

Chazan wants IDF to halt AIDS testing

MK Naomi Chazan (Meretz) is demanding that Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai order that blood tests for AIDS detection not be taken from soldiers. She said the tests are carried out only on homosexuals, Ethiopians, drug users, and those with tattoos and are carried out without their consent or knowledge. "By defining certain target groups for AIDS tests, the IDF is acting irresponsibly and branding these soldiers, and it is opening the front door to the racist genie and the fear and hatred of the different," Chazan said. *Liat Collins*

Matza to mediate rift for MDA, fund-raisers

Health Minister Yehoshua Matza will spend three days in the US next week to try to resolve an ongoing dispute between American Red Magen David for Israel and Magen David Adom management in Tel Aviv. The dispute has caused delays in the transfer of funds from the American friends' organization, including \$3.2 million promised for a communications system and \$850,000 for a computer system in the blood bank. ARMDI donations have dropped from \$2 million four years ago to less than \$500,000 today, but the donation of 60 to 70 new ambulances a year continues. The Health Ministry did not disclose the cause of the dispute between the fund-raisers and MDA officials. *Judy Siegel*

Bezeq cuts rates on calls to US

Bezeq International has cut its overseas dialing rates to four countries, including the US, effective today, with permission from the Communications Ministry. This, says BI, makes its charges for calls to the US the cheapest in the market 61 agorot plus VAT per minute. The cuts were made possible because BI's share of the market has fallen below 70% over the past 28 days, thus the ministry has reduced its control of rates. The new rates to France and Holland are 84 agorot and to Morocco NIS 1.07 (all plus VAT, per minute). These cheaper rates are for those who register with BI. *Judy Siegel*

Two arrested in robbery-shooting

Two men were arrested yesterday for the armed robbery and shooting of the manager of a Tel Aviv employment agency earlier in the day. As the manager left the agency, on Rehov Dizengoff, for the bank, carrying a suitcase containing \$20,000 in cash, two men pulled up on a motorcycle and demanded the bag. When he refused to give it to them, one shot him in the leg, lightly wounding him. They then took the money and fled. Police traced the two to a Jaffa house and arrested them, recovering the suitcase, the money, and the victim's wallet. The two face a remand hearing today. *Tim*

Cabinet OKs 'security basket' for taxi drivers

The cabinet yesterday authorized Transportation Minister Yitzhak Levy to determine priorities for a "security basket" to protect taxi drivers, and asked him and Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman to come up with funding for the program within 30 days. Among the suggestions for the basket are installing a satellite-based system that would help locate drivers during times of distress; installing a transparent divider between the driver and passenger seats; conducting courses for drivers on how to respond if they are threatened; and issuing pistols to drivers. *Jerusalem Post Staff*



Netanyahu and 'The Nanny'

American television actress Fran Drescher, star of "The Nanny," chats with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and his wife Sara at the Knesset last night. She attended a Knesset ceremony celebrating 100 years since the founding of modern Zionism. The festivities were sponsored by the Jerusalem Municipality and the Jerusalem Fund of Aish HaTorah. *(Brian Hender)*

Wiesenthal Center seeks war trial

Office wants alleged Nazi Konrad Kalejs extradited from Australia

By ARYEH DEAN COHEN and news agencies

The Simon Wiesenthal Center's Israeli Office called on Latvia yesterday to seek the extradition of Konrad Kalejs from Australia for alleged Nazi war crimes. Kalejs, 84, returned to Australia on Wednesday after being deported from Canada two days earlier. As an alleged officer with the notorious Arajs Kommando in Latvia, Kalejs is accused of involvement in the murders of tens of thousands of Jews during World War II. Efraim Zuroff, director of the Wiesenthal Center's Israel Office, said he wrote a letter to Latvia's Ambassador to Israel, Yvars Silars, asking Latvia to try Kalejs. "He committed most of his crimes in Latvia," Zuroff wrote. "We believe that such a trial, if held in Latvia, would be of unique historical and moral significance

for the Latvian people and contemporary Latvian society. Zuroff hopes Latvia could "provide the documents and witnesses that have so far eluded the Australian authorities." An official at the Latvian embassy said yesterday that the request was submitted to Latvia's foreign ministry. If Latvia tried to have Kalejs extradited, they may have a problem, because Australian law wouldn't permit his deportation, even if he were convicted in Australia of war crimes. Australia's Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock said Zuroff urged Australia earlier this week to try Kalejs. The country's attorney general promised to investigate. The head of Australia's now defunct war crimes investigations unit accused the government of being too slow to act

against Kalejs. "I feel disappointed that Australia, my country, has put itself in this position where it can legitimately be criticized by the international community," said Bob Greenwood, former head of Australia's Special Investigations Unit. Greenwood said that he warned the government in 1992, that Kalejs, an Australian citizen, was bound to return, and that "they would have to be ready to act, otherwise the country could easily become something of an international laughing stock." "What the Australian Federal Police should by now be in a position to do is to take immediate action either to interview and possibly charge Kalejs, or inform Kalejs their investigation is such that they won't be charging him under the War Crimes Act," Greenwood said. Australia shut its Special Investigations

Unit in 1992 after three failed prosecutions and criticism that it was wasting millions of dollars of taxpayers' money. Former Nazi war crimes investigator Graham Blewitt, now deputy prosecutor of the war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, said it was unlikely Kalejs would ever be prosecuted. Blewitt told Australian Broadcasting Corporation radio that investigators never found enough evidence to prosecute Kalejs. "We reached the stage that there was insufficient evidence to bring a prosecution under the fairly high standard required to convict someone in the Australian courts, namely you needed to establish his guilt beyond reasonable doubt." Blewitt also said he did not believe the present government would be happy to open up the issue of war crimes again.

Soldier stable after spider bite

By JUDY SIEGEL

A 21-year-old soldier bitten in his sleep Wednesday night by a black widow spider was in stable condition yesterday after suffering a severe reaction to the venom. Doctors at Rebecca Sieff Hospital in Safed said they used various medications to relieve the symptoms, claiming that they could not locate antivenin for black widow venom. Health Ministry associate director-general Dr. Boaz Lev said, however, there is an adequate supply of antivenin for black widow venom in the emergency storehouse of the health ministry in Tel Aviv, and in this case its use was not necessary. Dr. Yosef Ezri, head of the respiratory intensive care unit at Rebecca Sieff hospital, noted that antivenin is in any case not recommended in the treatment of most black widow bites, as it can cause anaphylactic shock in some victims. Thus the antivenin should be used only for youngsters under the age of 16, old people, patients with chronic illnesses and others with very serious reactions. The soldier, who lives in the center of the country, was sleeping in an army tent on the Golan Heights when he awoke to the feeling of a needle prick. When he looked at his jaw, he saw a red spot with a white halo around it; within half an hour, he felt severe stomach and muscle pains, contractions of his back muscles, pain in his knees and weakness. Emergency room and intensive care unit doctors who diagnosed the cause said such bites are very rare and that they had never seen such a serious reaction to a black widow bite. They gave him Valium and drugs against pain. He was fully conscious yesterday, but was still suffering from heavy sweating and rapid changes in blood pressure. These after-effects could continue for as long as a week, said Ezri, but death from black widow bites is rare.

High Court gives go-ahead to Siso

By BATSHEVA TSUR

Shmuel Siso will take up the post of consul-general in New York next week, after the High Court of Justice yesterday turned down a petition challenging his qualifications. Justices Shlomo Levine, Theodor Orr, and Dalia Dornier rejected the petition by the Movement for Quality Government outright and ruled there were insufficient grounds for court intervention. "I am very relieved. The petition was based on rumors and justice has been done. I shall prove to all my opponents how well I can represent the state as consul-general," Siso said in response. The petition argued that Siso, until now mayor of

Kiryat Yam, "did not have the relevant qualifications and experience for the position, one of the most important and sensitive in the foreign service." It alleged that Siso's appointment was political and that Foreign Minister David Levy was beholden to Siso for helping his Geshet Party in the 1996 election campaign. Also noted in the appeal was that the Civil Service Commissioner Shmuel Hollander had questioned the administrative procedure involved in Siso's appointment. The justices ruled that it is not the court's duty to intervene in political appointments unless corruption is involved. They said that movement members should have expressed their feelings on the op-ed page of a newspaper rather than in court.

SISO

Continued from Page 12

Siso has met with UN Ambassador Dore Gold, and hopes the two can cooperate, each within his own area of authority. In the past there have been periodic tensions between the UN ambassador and the New York consul-general. "We are in the middle of the peace process," he says. "This is not a business argument or a dispute with neighbors at home. It's an historic dispute and as such it will not be solved overnight. There are ups and downs. Right now we seem to be in a 'down' but we must pray that an 'up'

follows. Crises and achievements can both be expected." Siso had praise for his predecessor Avital, who was appointed by the previous Labor government. He said that she represented Israel well. "I hope that I will also represent Israel well - in all its variety," he said. Siso has to resign as mayor to take up the consul post, but said he hopes to return to Kiryat Yam when his term in New York is up. Apart from his former law practice he is also a board member of several concerns including Amigur, the public housing company. "I'm not the type of person who lives just for politics. I ran for mayor because I grew up on

the mistakes made in the absorption of immigrants during my parents' time and I am grateful for the chance to do it differently," Siso said. Siso says he hopes to prove himself at his new job despite the hurtful criticism of his English skills. He writes off the criticism as motivated mainly by jealousy. "These attacks, as I said, come from irrelevant considerations. Perhaps there are those who think that if I don't go, they will go in my place," he said. In New York, said Siso, "I will be able to represent the State of Israel in the best possible way. I know that in the US, people are judged by their achievements."



Kahalani chats with Russia's premier

Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin (right) gestures as he chats with Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani in Moscow yesterday. Meanwhile, Asst.-Cmdr. Meir Gilboa, who heads the investigation into the Zvi Ben-Ari case and who accompanied Kahalani to Russia, said that he expected Russian authorities would provide evidence regarding Ben-Ari's alleged involvement in murder. *(Ronen)*

BARAK

Continued from Page 1

The Histadrut also said it would seek a court injunction against the party, and accused Barak of planning to hire staff of his own choice and have them sign personal contracts.

Angry employees festooned the building with hurriedly-composed, hand-painted placards. Some signs compared Barak's behavior to accusations that as IDF chief of general staff, he failed to stay behind after soldiers died in an accident at the Tze'elim base. "Barak flees again - as at Tze'elim," one poster said. Barak

is used to running away," read another. Yet a third said: "Barak will never become prime minister this way." MK Yossi Beilin, who had challenged Barak for the party leadership several months ago, urged Barak to rescind the dismissals and to negotiate with the staff about budget cuts.

STRIKE

Continued from Page 1

Katz scoffed at Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman, who "cannot understand" what the strike is about. "Neeman is all set. He has a budgetary session [senior officials get their pension from the state budget, without having to pay part of their wages for it all

their life]. Moreover, his wages are updated every few months by dozens of percent," he said. The Histadrut has not yet decided whether to strike the whole economy at the beginning of September, or to strike separately in each sector, then escalate to a general strike. The leaders of the large unions urged a nationwide strike, including mass demonstrations and roadblocks, which

would paralyze the entire economy for weeks on end. Earlier this week, the Histadrut sent out more than 100 notices to employers in the public and business sector, warning of the expected general strike. The strike notices were also sent to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, the entire cabinet and the directors-general of all the ministries.

Hanegbi: Judges must be protected

By BATSHEVA TSUR

Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi came out yesterday in favor of administrative detentions if they are necessary to protect the lives of judges.

"The division in charge of security of judges in the Justice Ministry has been working harder than ever," Hanegbi told Israel Radio, noting that certain judges have been provided with bodyguards and that courtrooms are being protected.

"[Monday's] attack on the Petah Tikva courthouse is a low point which Israeli society had never reached before," he said. "The circumstances do not seem to indicate that this is an

individual criminal's act of revenge on someone, but rather a campaign against the entire legal system."

However, he refused to comment on who might have been involved.

Hanegbi said that "any tool that is necessary to help guard the judges is vital, because it also guards democracy."

He said he had heard media reports that the Internal Security Ministry is considering the use of administrative detentions.

"[Such detentions] have been in use for decades in this country. I do not want to express an opinion on them," Hanegbi said.

"But there is a threat here to human life and these judges are carrying out their public duty.

If they are hurt, we shall all be hurt. We cannot rule out any tool that helps guard them."

Reacting to Hanegbi's remarks, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel said that administrative detention is "a severe infringement of basic human rights. This is detention without trial and without the opportunity on the part of the detainee to react to the charges."

ACRI said it had recently appealed to Hanegbi about hundreds of such detentions. "The explosion at the courthouse was a serious crime and should be handled by the police with all the means at its disposal... so that the criminals can be brought to trial," ACRI said in a statement.

Susskin released to house arrest



Tatiana Susskin (Brian Hendler)

Tatiana Susskin, the woman accused of pasting up posters in Hebron depicting the Prophet Mohammed as a pig, was released from jail yesterday to house arrest, a court spokesman said.

The Jerusalem District Court handed Susskin, 26, over to an aunt in return for a \$14,200 guarantee that Susskin would remain at the aunt's house. The address wasn't revealed for the suspect's protection, court officials said.

"If there were an order to hang me, they would do it immediately. But to free me is a little hard for them in the meantime. The fact is that I am being released," Susskin told reporters after the decision.

Russian-born Susskin received court permission on Wednesday to undergo tests by defense psychia-

trists over the next two weeks. Her lawyer Shmuel Casper said a previous examination had found that Susskin had a "psychiatric past" and "pathological problems on the day" she put up the posters, which was June 27.

Last week the court ruled Susskin was fit to stand trial after tests at a mental hospital. (Reuters)

WEATHER Golden 17-25

Haifa 24-30 Tiberias 24-30
Afula 22-32
Samaria 18-28
Tel Aviv 24-29
Jerusalem 17-27
Beer Sheva 21-30
Dead Sea 25-35
Eilat 26-38

Forecast: Partly cloudy to clear.
Unseasonably cool
Shabbat: No change in temperatures.



Rally with style

James Black (left) of Belfast, Northern Ireland, poses with Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert and his 1929 Rolls Royce in front of City Hall yesterday. Black arrived in the capital yesterday in his antique car, after making a 3,000 km. trip from Belfast via France, Italy, and Cyprus, where he and the car boarded a ferry to Israel. Black's car is one of 50 antique cars that are to participate in a London-to-Jerusalem rally next year, sponsored by the Jewish National Fund to mark the state's 50th anniversary. (Joe Malcohn)

'School year won't start without promised funds'

The school year will open only after the commitment to transfer "NIS 330 million to the education system is met, this along the arrangement set by the ministry, that is, additional funds for teaching hours which will be transferred directly to the ministry and will allow us to employ teachers, not students" for the long school day project, Education Ministry Director-General Benzion Dell said yesterday.

Speaking at a gathering of local authority education department heads in Netanya, he said the government has to keep its promises. "The education system has been preparing for 10 months for this addition. To unilaterally announce today, just over a week before school is supposed to open, that the Finance Ministry agrees to transfer only NIS 130m. out of the NIS 330m. promised means torpedoing the smooth opening of the school year," he said. Aryeh Dean Cohen

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AROUND THE WORLD

	LOW	HIGH	
	C	F	
Amsterdam	14	57	clear
Berlin	18	64	partly cloudy
Buenos Aires	63	37	partly cloudy
Cairo	22	72	cloudy
Chicago	14	57	clear
Copenhagen	17	63	clear
Frankfurt	16	61	clear
Haifa	18	61	clear
Hong Kong	26	79	rain
Jakarta	26	79	clear
London	16	61	clear
Los Angeles	19	66	partly cloudy
Madrid	21	70	partly cloudy
Moscow	16	61	partly cloudy
Munich	10	50	partly cloudy
New York	11	52	rain
Nice	20	68	clear
Paris	15	59	partly cloudy
Rome	17	63	partly cloudy
Stockholm	16	61	clear
Sydney	15	59	clear
Tel Aviv	20	78	clear
Toronto	13	55	rain
Vienna	15	59	partly cloudy

Sallai Meridor to run for Jewish Agency chairman

By ARYEH DEAN COHEN

Sallai Meridor, head of the World Zionist Organization's Settlement Division and brother of Likud MK Dan Meridor, yesterday officially announced he would seek the Likud nomination to run for Jewish Agency and WZO chairman.

Meridor, 42, said he is not concerned about reports that Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu has already indicated a preference for Knesset Immigration and Absorption Committee chairwoman Naomi Blumenthal to oppose incumbent Avraham Burg.

"The Likud is a democratic party, and we'll have democratic elections to select our candidate," he said. "But if there is another candidate or candidates, we will go through the democratic process, hopefully in a friendly manner, and hopefully make the right and better choice."

Meridor denied his candidacy has anything to do with tensions between his brother and Netanyahu, saying: "The issues ahead of us are too important to allow personal things to take precedence."

Asked if he would step aside if Netanyahu asks him not to run, Meridor said: "I intend to run. I hope the prime minister will support my candidacy, and I believe that if elected, I will get the full cooperation of the prime minister and the government, because the cause is too important for any of us not to cooperate and work together."

Meridor, who is on both the Jewish Agency and WZO executives, said the agency is "a critical tool for maintaining the unity of the Jewish people, and it has an important role in projecting that unity to all Jews."

Meridor, who is leaving for the US on Sunday, said he would discuss the work of the Neeman Committee, which is trying to find a compromise on the conversion issue, with Jewish leaders there.

"I think that the Neeman Committee is doing very important work," he said. "From reports I hear, there is chance, although this is not yet a certainty but a good probability, that we are going to reach an understand-

ing which will add unity and peace among Jews. And I would definitely urge all Jews from the different streams to continue the discussions and accept the proposal, which apparently was a compromise suggested by Neeman."

Asked about recent criticism of the agency for bringing large numbers of non-Jewish immigrants into the country, Meridor said: "I think that we should understand that the reality of Jewish life today is that there are unfortunately high rates of intermarriage, and seeking to have large waves of immigration implies that we will have to deal with having their relatives in

Israel, who may not be Jewish when they enter.

"If we have to choose between leaving a Jew out of Israel with his non-Jewish relative, or bringing him in, I would unequivocally choose to bring the Jew in, with his relative."

Meridor added that he supports "accelerating the process of integrating those non-Jewish relatives into the Jewish people, bearing in mind that by the very fact of moving to Israel, desiring to belong to the Jewish people, speaking Hebrew, sending their children to Jewish schools, and serving in the IDF, they are taking significant steps toward being accepted into the Jewish people."

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